

## GAYETY IN THE GRILL ROOMS

### NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTIES IN THE BIG HOTELS.

The informality of the Carnival Prefixed to the Conventionality of the Regular Dining Rooms—The Fare and the Decorations—The Patrons.

Grill room parties at the fashionable hotels have come to be a distinguishing feature of carnival night, as New Year's Eve is spoken of among the purveyors of amusement. Beginning with the Waldorf-Astoria, the manager, Mr. Barse, expresses the belief that the carnival idea is so firmly planted in the mind of the Manhattanite that it is bound to show itself in the future by adding the picturesque features of costume parties to the annual merry-making.

"That is the only needed thing now to make the carnival complete," he continues. "As you see, our decorations in the grill room carry out to the minutest detail the carnival spirit—paper caps and masks, confetti, and the various toys, particularly the blow toys, which are never absent from the street scenes of Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Rome and

Altogether the Waldorf-Astoria is taking care of over 3,000 midnight diners on this occasion, and the grill room seats about 700 of these. The chef who presides over the big enamelled electric grill is all in white, even to his shoes. As he shows how it is possible to have a cold storage compartment in juxtaposition to the grill he asserts that it is only a matter of time when all the cooking of a big hotel like the Waldorf will be done on the grill, which means quicker and better work and greater health for the kitchen staff.

That the New Year's supper appetite is not always confined to dainties and special dishes is shown as he removes from the interior a big sirloin steak which has been ordered by one of the family parties and which has taken only eight minutes on the electric grill instead of the fifteen which would have been required if it had been served from the kitchen proper. The steak was selected by the head of the family out of the glass case where meats, vegetables and chafing dish materials are displayed.

A feature on which the Waldorf prides itself and which is in constant use at the New Year supper tables is a chafing dish equipment designed by the famous Oscar. This is the silver wagon, so-called,



THE WALDORF'S MOVING CHAFING DISH.

other places. New Year's Eve seems to be the only time when in semi-public places the carnival spirit can reign unmolested.

"It would not surprise us here if in another year the entire establishment was given over on this occasion to masquerade and custom supper parties, each vying with the others in elegance and picturesqueness, as each hotel tonight is trying to outdo the other in some way."

"And the Queen of Beauty?" is asked,

which can be rolled about from table to table as demanded. There is a place on the top for three chafing dishes. There is a special chef who presides over this outfit, and for New Year's supper hours he has a staff of four assistants, all like himself and the grill chef dressed in white linen. The space of the wagon top which is not taken up by the chafing dishes is used for the condiments and spices, and below is an oven to keep the plates warm, compartments for silver and spaces for eggs, butter, cream—in



SOME INDIANS AT THE ASTOR.

The manager has apparently thought out the matter to its finish.

"I don't see why every hotel and restaurant should not elect its own queen by the votes of the people present, and that would certainly give another incentive to make the scene as picturesque as possible," he replies. "This hotel, for instance, would certainly mark the election by an appropriate gift to the lady chosen and I have no doubt the others would follow suit. You mark my words, next year possibly, certainly the year after, carnival night will be a real carnival, which will mean not only a time for eating and drinking but a time for historic and decorative dressing, an ensemble which will give a fitting picture for the frame provided."

The grill room of the Waldorf-Astoria had been preoccupied for several weeks beforehand by those who prefer its informality to the conventionality in dressing and service of the regular dining rooms. A large percentage of the tables were reserved for family parties, and several three generations are seen,

fact all necessary materials except the meats and fish, which are sent for as required.

There is no set menu anywhere in the hotel at this time, but there is the understood restriction that an order shall approximate at least \$3 a person. Bismarck broilers, terrapin, truffles and all sorts of game and seafood are ordered. Some terrapin with sherry was cooked so deliciously that even a party who had just finished their own order of breasts of grouse with port wine sauce, for which they had paid \$2.75 a cover, looked at it enviously. It costs the host \$3.50 a portion.



THE DIAMOND BUCKLE STAIRCASE AT THE KNICKERBOCKER.

"He is of the old school of the gourmands of a fast receding generation," says the guide, "and still clings to the belief that the only two luxuries fit for such an occasion are Baltimore terrapin and canvasback duck, for which \$5 is asked and willingly paid by this class of patrons."

The supper of one party of four is appraised by the manager at \$10 exclusive of wine, the vintage champagne costing \$8 a quart.

Other chafing and grill room specialties noticed are oysters à la Louise at \$1.25 and oysters à la Waldorf at \$1.50, truffles with champagne sauce at \$3, partridge at \$4, and many parties are dining simply on crab meat creole at \$1.50 a portion. There is no rule in regard to liquid refreshment, and in addition to the champagne flowing like water many guests have ordered special Rhine wines, sauternes, and the terrapin and canvasback experts name a celebrated Burgundy at \$3.50 a quart and proclaim it the only drink for the occasion.

The red ribbons, the vivid poinsettias, the Japanese cherry blossoms and the now popular scarlet camellias, the last worn by a great number of women, unite in a mosaic of decorative cheerfulness. The family parties are gowned for the most part inconspicuously, but at the tables reserved for the overflow that cannot be accommodated in other parts of the dining space conventional evening dress prevails, although the management makes no requirement in any part of the hotel regarding it. The guide explains: "We cannot control the question of dress any more than we can that of noise," a statement that is emphasized by an ear-splitting blast on a toy tin trumpet in the possession of a prosperous broker, one of the regular guests of the grill room, whose party is the noisiest and the most fashionably gowned of all in the room.

The grill room at the Hotel Belmont is a little out of the route of New Year's Eve travel. The grill is downstairs on a level with the sidewalk and seats several hundred. A large part of the assembly consists of out of town patrons of the hotel who have come in from nearby suburban resorts. All seem to know one another and the atmosphere of certain corners of the room resembles that of a big country house party.

The grill room of the Belmont is done in weathered oak, the furniture is mission, the Christmas wreaths, long boxes of ferns and palms and jardinières of flowers here and there are the principal decorations. The hotel makes a feature of its confection counterpieces. One party of railroad men have a train of cars, and another, a party of men and women presided over by a steamship man, have a complete model of an Atlantic liner.

Those of the grill room patrons who know the specialties of the house in an other line, the culinary, are ordering crab meat à la Maryland. This is served in a special dish, a Dresden plate shaped like a crab's shell. The manager says that the hotel makes no difference in the appointments for the grill room table, as many other establishments do. The service here for the New Year's crowd is à la carte, with no restrictions regarding amount of order or gowning.

The Holland House, like Sherry's and Delmonico's, does not make a specialty of a grill room. The Manhattan grill is exclusively for men, and on New Year's Eve houses a somewhat lonely looking bunch. The Gotham, Savoy, Imperial, St. Regis and several others classified more particularly as family hotels do not include grill rooms in their equipment, and the small Dutch room at the Netherlands is patronized by quiet evening parties made up of guests of the house.

The Beaux Arts room, situated below the regular restaurant, is very popular among "affinity parties" and celebrates this New Year's Eve the installation of a second tablet in its wall. The first tablet, in a retired corner of one of the alcoves, marks the meeting place of two lovers, now happily married. For the table over which it is placed at least a hundred applications were made and the party who got it expect 1910 will bring them all sorts of good luck on account of the placing.

A retired stairway leads away from the grill and whiffs splendors of the Hotel Astor's dining rooms into the grill room, decorated with Indian trophies, baskets, belts, deerkins, robes, &c. A great many of the grill room patrons at the 1909-10 supper hour are foreigners who, it is explained by the guide, represent the large class of travellers who come yearly to America and are more interested in seeing the romantic side of the country, as depicted in Longfellow's "Hiawatha" and the works of Fenimore Cooper, than the excitements of the metropolis.

The grill room of the Knickerbocker Hotel includes among its furnishings a facsimile of a celebrated ceiling from the castle on the Loire, a Rembrandt

painting, and shades of fluted glass, resembling silk over the electric lights, which throw a soft, rosy glow and cause the feminine visitors the mental glow that comes from the knowledge that they are placed in the best light possible. Twelve extra policemen are stationed at the entrance and through the corridor, and the grill room is under particular surveillance.

The stairway, which is placed so that each new arrival may be carefully studied as she advances, is the delight of women whose gorgeous dressing ends in buckled slippers which otherwise might not be seen. Nothing but champagne is ordered here and the fixed price of \$5 a plate is the rule of the grill rooms in the regular dining rooms. There is no restriction regarding dress and business suits, though few are noted here and there. Souvenirs of doll crowns, masks, paper caps and other carnival toys abound; confetti is present. Lobsters are very popular on the tables and the choice means, so the management explains, that the grill room patrons are especially fond of the lobster and champagne combination, a fact that applies as well to the feminine taste as to the masculine.

The Plaza grill room has its special orchestra, led by Gail-Hockey, who has a programme adapted for the occasion. No places are reserved, according to the annual usage, after half past 10, and the

500 seats in the room are filled at that hour except a few held for theatregoers. The grill room here is white, with French decorations, the chairs having leather seats and leather seats outlining the walls. Some deep alcoves comfortably benched run right under the sidewalk, where more affinity parties are ensconced.

On the wide edges of the partitions

Collins with salad Scheelkopf, crepes Suzette and special coffee. A new dessert made for the New Year's Eve suppers is coupe Anna, the recipe for which calls for Spanish melons cut in dice stewed in maple syrup, burned afterward with benedictine and kirsch, the dice then frozen in vanilla cream and the whole topped with raspberry ice. The chef's own suggestion to a party who desire a particularly unusual supper, without regard to expense, is oysters Holbrook, consommé Attala, sea bass flambe, broiled guinea hen,

a deep sauceron piece a mirepoix, then throw in all the above, add a good sized piece of butter, season with salt and place in the oven. When nicely colored take out, drain the butter and fat, bathe nicely with clear water, put over the fire, bring to a boil and then let simmer for three hours. According to size, take either two or three beets, grate them, place in water and then on the fire for an hour to bring out their color. Also prepare in the meantime a julienne of braised celery and the breast of the duck. When about ready to



PLAZA AFFINITIES UNDER THE SIDEWALK.

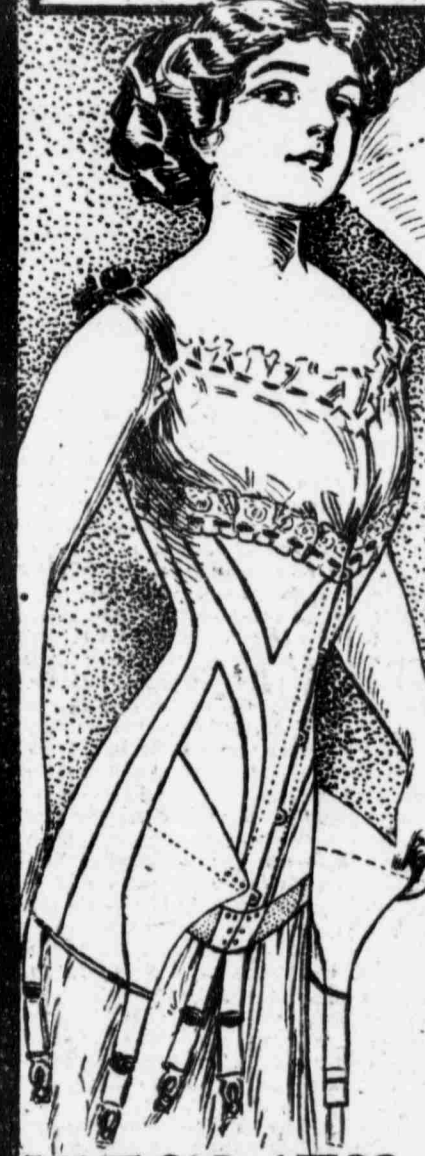
Heart solid Clementine, Château d'Ivry, Café Turc.

Consommé Attala, as will be seen, is hardly adapted for a small household. The recipe is given to show the time and skill required for making one article in the menu of a supper party of this kind. It is as follows:

"Two wild ducks, preferably redheads, four stalks of celery in branches, turkey necks and feet cut up, one very small root of horseradish not cut up, a bouquet. In

serve pass the consommé through a cloth, add the best juice and the julienne of braised celery and duck. Serve very hot."

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